

Shan e Nuzul: Circumstances of the Revelation of The Holy Quran

Discourses Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV in January 1998

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For those who had set up home already and had faith to love those who came to them for refuge and hanker not after that which is given them and prefer *others* to themselves even though they be poor. Whoso is rid of the covetousness of their own soul are the ones who will be successful.¹

By mentioning the situation of the Helpers *The Holy Quran* has preserved for posterity the story of their generosity. We would not have come to know of it had this verse not been revealed and the verse itself is sufficient to give its own Circumstance of the Revelation. One's subtle emotions are observed by God. The ending of the verse suggest that the verse is not just relevant to the past but that whoever saves their heart from greed will be among the ingenuous.

Many a time *The Holy Quran* masks people's faults but when the whole society is at fault it addresses it openly. In this regard it is disingenuous to say that such and such used to do this because when God is covering it then nobody has any right to apply it to a particular individual. *The Holy Quran* has masked certain things about the Wives of the Prophet. Those interested in the Occasions of Revelation say diverse things about the People of the House of the Prophet and as such become guilty of dishonouring them:

O ye who believe! Let not one people deride people who may become better than them nor let women deride women who may become better than them and do not slander your own people, nor taunt each other with nicknames. It is bad indeed to earn foul reputation after *professing* the faith; and those who do not repent are indeed doing wrong.²

In this there is an admonishment about a nation deriding other nations and especially women because this weakness is found markedly among them that they start to see themselves as better than others on the grounds of their family or wealth. This weakness was found at that time as well and it is generally quite disgusting to call people names and to tease them or speak ill of someone through gestures. This habit is found quite a bit in schools around here especially in areas where there is racial diversity. It is very important to shun this. This verse is saying that if one does such a thing then in spite of believing one is in actuality outside the sphere of faith. If such people do not repent after this declaration then these same people will be deemed evildoers before God. Another verse sheds light upon the social aspect:

¹ *The Holy Quran*. Al Hashr [The Gathering]: 10.

² Al Hujrat [The Apartments]: 12.

O ye who believe! Enter not houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted those inside. It is best if you bear this in mind.³

This does not permit entering other people's houses without permission (before entering) and greeting those inside this will be better for you and as a result you will always remember good council. These manners that are found in the western civilisation today had been commanded by *The Holy Quran* 1400 years ago. If this teaching is followed then there would not even be any need for bolts. I am concerned that our people do not follow this injunction as it requires but the culture in these countries is similar to what is [pictured] here. It is a common ill of the eastern countries that one puts on one's shoes and starts roaming from house to house. We have guards at ours so people cannot come in but not everyone has guards. What a good teaching *The Holy Quran* had revealed 1400 years ago. So remember these things. Phone first and seek permission, go only if it is granted, always greet the people at home when entering.

Similarly in Surah al-Nur men are commanded to keep their gazes lowered for it is very important for one's chastity:

Holy is He Who took His servant along by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque the precincts of which We have blessed that We might show him of Our Signs. Verily He alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.⁴

Many *Ahadith* [Prophetic Traditions] are to be found in relation to the verse '**Holy is He Who took His servant along by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque the precincts of which We have blessed**' about its Occasion of Revelation which purport to create an impression against that depicted by *The Holy Quran* and have defected to the wrong position about the Night Journey. The verse says that Allah took His Prophet along with Him and this is a manifestation of the Attributes which has not been shown to anyone else and this sojourn was also into the Divine Attributes and that *Aqsa* [Distant] Mosque mentioned was not even there at the time. In this regard only those Traditions are correct which speak of the subject of the *Aqsa* Mosque in which all Prophets were led in prayer by the Holy Prophet

ﷺ and this theme is in accord with that mentioned in '**When the Messengers appear at their time**'.⁵ This is a spiritual position. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed that place all the Prophets congregated behind him in prayer. Such Traditions as are in accord with this verse should be treated with respect. The Distant Mosque mentioned here was not a mosque in the physical world. How big a mosque would be needed to accommodate 124000 Prophets? But there is no need for a material mosque for the spirits. The Ritual Prayer that was conducted behind the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a spiritual prayer. There was a prophecy about the future age in the *Isra* [Night Journey] which was to be fulfilled when Islam would prevail over all other religions.

Then in the context of the Occasions of Revelation there is also Surah al-Jinn. One will find many narrations about the Circumstance of its Revelation. Now who were those genies who would listen to the Quran when the Holy Prophet was unaware? Historically some narrations have been spread and it is found mentioned in some histories of Afghanistan that they sent

³ Al Nur [The Light]: 28.

⁴ Bani Israel [Children of Israel]: 2.

⁵ Al Mursalat [The Emissaries of Wind]: 12.

some convoys to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in order to ascertain what kind of a claim the claimant of Arabia has made. It is also possible that some people wanted to meet the Holy Prophet and that he met them in isolation. The history of Afghanistan proves that these people went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and returned and also that they believed:

Remember when thou didst leave thy home early in the morning to assigning to the believers their positions in battle. Allah is the All-Hearing the All-Knowing.

When two of your groups were about to lose heart, even though Allah was their friend. The loyal ought to trust in Allah.⁶

This is about the strategy of war to remind of the time when he [the Holy Prophet] left his family early one morning and was assigning to the Companions their Positions in battle. Seeing the state of affairs two of the group displayed cowardice although Allah was their friend. This is also from among those verses which place a covering over faults. Despite this fault Allah dealt with kindness and masked the fault with the veil of His friendship. It requires a lot of effort to leave house early in the morning and assign positions in battle.

Observe how one day in the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is mentioned in detail. Similarly no tales of the Circumstances of the Revelation are required about the descending angels who helped them out. *The Holy Quran* intends to say that the laws of nature were subjected and compelled to support to Holy Prophet ﷺ. This is the true meaning of the descent of angels. The angels appointed in the universe set forth the winds in favour of the Holy Prophet. His prayers and onslaughts were supported by the angels. This is indeed what is meant by:

So you slew them not but it was Allah Who slew them. Thou threwest not for it was not your throw but it was Allah Who threw, so that He might confer on the believers a trial from Himself – a goodly trial – Surely Allah is the All-Hearing the All-Knowing.⁷

That you threw under the command of Allah's destiny and as soon as you threw the entire system of creation turned in your favour because it was the will of God. So it was as if it was Allah who threw. So the laws are turned in favour of the believers to assist them and are turned against the enemies. People tend to assume that the winds coincidentally blew in favour as if they are in the know.

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⁶ Āl Imran [Family of Imran]: 122, 123.

⁷ Al-Anfal [The Booty]: 18.